

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 7347

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BL

SUBJ: THE NEW BANZER REGIME-SURVIVAL PROSPECTS

1. IT IS CONSENSUS OF COUNTRY TEAM THAT NEW REGIME IN BOLIVIA IS FIRMLY ENTRENCHED AND LIKELY TO SURVIVE AT LEAST FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS YEAR AND PROBABLY WELL INTO NEXT.

2. WORKING AGAINST THE REGIME IN THE LONGER TERM IS THE ENMITY OF THE FSB (FALANGE) LEADERSHIP WHICH FEELS BETRAYED BY BANZER'S DECISION TO POSTPONE ELECTIONS: THE FACT THAT BANZER HAS DECIDED TO REMAIN IN OFFICE INDEFINITELY: THE ALMOST PREDICTABLE FACTIONALISM IN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE INCREASING LIKELIHOOD THAT OTHERWISE DISPARATE POLITICAL ELEMENTS MIGHT JOIN FORCES TO OUST THE DICTATORSHIP.

3. WORKING IN FAVOR OF THE REGIME IN THE SHORTER TERM IS ITS MOMENTUM AND DECISIVENESS COMPARED TO THE DIVISIONS AND INERTIA WHICH CHARACTERIZE MUCH OF THE PRESENT AND POTENTIAL OPPOSITION: THE LACK OF REGARD FOR POLITICIANS AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC: THE OFT-VOICED BELIEF THAT THE COUNTRY IS AT THE ECONOMIC TAKE-OFF STAGE AND COULD PROSPER IF ONLY THERE WERE ORDER, COORDINATED POLICIES, AND CONTINUITY OF PURPOSE: PLUS THE ABSENCE, THUS FAR, OF A PERSON WHO COULD AND WOULD RALLY
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OPPOSITION TO CHALLENGE BANZER'S POSITION.

4. COMMENTS: THE SCRIPT FOR THE NEW ORDER ALLEGEDLY WAS WRITTEN BY FERNANDO DIEZ DE MEDINA, THE EMINENCIA GRIS OF THE BARRIENTOS GOVERNMENT. IF BANZER WERE BARRIENTOS HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO CARRY THIS OFF FOR MORE THAN A FEW MONTHS. HE IS NOT. WHAT WILL SUCCEED THE BANZER REGIME, AND WHEN, WILL BECOME THE MAJOR POLITICAL QUESTIONS IN BOLIVIA OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS. AT THE MOMENT, WE WOULD GUESS THAT BANZER WOULD STEP DOWN AFTER ABOUT FOUR YEARS IN OFFICE IN FAVOR OF ANOTHER SENIOR MILITARY OFFICER (SAY LECHIN SUAREZ), WHO WOULD MAINTAIN THE MAJOR FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC POLICIES, BUT PROBABLY REVISE SOME OF THE POLITICAL RULES OF THE GAME.

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